

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 7, 8, 14-16 and 21-24 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, independent claims 1, 8, 15, 16 and 22 are amended to even further distinguish over the cited references, and claim 24 is added. Support for the amendments and the added claim can be found in the specification, for example, at page 14, line 10 to page 15, line 5 and from page 24, line 16 to page 25, line 14. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiners Pham and Truong in the November 14, 2007 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks. Specifically, claims 1, 8, 15, 16 and 22 are amended to comply with the Examiners' helpful suggestions made during the interview.

**I. Rejections of Claims 1, 7, 8, 14, 16 and 21-23**

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 8, 16, 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori, U.S. Patent No. 5,761,496 in view of Okuda et al. (Okuda), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0001099 A1; and rejects claims 7, 14 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori in view of Okuda, and further in view of Brown et al. (Brown), U.S. Patent No. 6,498,612. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the interview, the combination of Hattori and Okuda fails to disclose or suggest that when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located, as recited in independent claims 1, 8, 16 and 22.

Hattori is silent as to geographic areas (see page 15 of Office Action). As discussed during the interview, Okuda discloses a print service system that sets a fee charging system depending upon each service requested, and that determines a fee depending upon the past use records of a user (Abstract). Okuda discloses a printing shop selection process by a user (paragraph [0141]) in which a print service server 100 is accessed by a user to search a print service shop 101 (paragraph [0142]). Okuda teaches that shop search conditions, such as shop location information, are designated by the user (see step S2101 in Fig. 21; paragraph [0142]). However, Okuda does not teach or suggest a retrieval unit changes a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located, as recited in independent claims 1, 8, 16 and 22.

Further, as discussed above, Okuda teaches that the printing shop selection process is performed by the user (paragraphs [0141] and [142]). Thus, in Okuda, the user sets the search conditions, not the retrieval unit, as in claims 1, 8 and 22, when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria.

Thus, the combination of Hattori and Okuda fails to disclose or suggest that when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located, as recited in independent claims 1, 8, 16 and 22.

Therefore, claims 1, 8, 16 and 22 are patentable over the combination of Hattori and Okuda. Because claims 7, 14, 21 and 23 incorporate the features of claims 1, 8, 16 and 22, and because Brown fails to overcome the deficiencies of Hattori and Okuda, these claims also are

patentable over the combination of cited references for this reason, as well as for the additional features these claims recite.

For example, the combination of Hattori and Okuda fails to disclose or suggest that if the request from the client includes neither the retrieval range nor a retrieval target area, the retrieval unit judges whether or not a service to be retrieved is a service for which a geographical condition is important, as recited in claim 23. As discussed above, Okuda teaches that the printing shop selection process is performed by the user (paragraphs [0141] and [142]). Thus, in Okuda, the user judges whether or not a geographical condition is important, not the retrieval unit, as in claim 23, if the request from the client includes neither the retrieval range nor a retrieval target area.

Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

## **II. Rejection of Claim 15**

The Office Action rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hattori in view of Brown. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

The combination of Hattori and Brown fails to disclose or suggest a retrieval result in response to a service retrieval request and output means for rearranging an order of a plurality of items of service information included in the retrieval result based upon a magnitude of values of the attribute items, wherein the rearranging is executed when the plurality of items of service information in the retrieval result exceeds a number set in advance, as recited in independent claim 15.

As discussed during the interview, Brown discloses a directory services user-interface extension architecture (Abstract). The Office Action asserts that changes or additions to the user interface software modules or data records (see col. 3, lines 28-31) correspond to the claimed rearranging of a plurality of items of service information included in a retrieval result. The changes or additions in Brown are not performed when the changes or additions

("plurality of items") exceed a number set in advance, and there is no evidence that one skilled in the art would have combined the teaching of Brown in the system of Hattori to result in the combination of features recited in independent claim 15. The Office Action asserts that Hattori teaches that if an estimated retrieval count is greater than the minimum retrieval count and less than the maximum retrieval count, a "retrieval expression" is modified repeatedly until a specified condition is met. Specifically, the Office Action states that "if the retrieval parameter K exceeds a minimum retrieval count (number), then the expression is modified (rearranged)." However, the only element modified ("rearranged") repeatedly in Hattori is the retrieval parameter K, which is adjusted based on a retrieval count (see col. 23, lines 30-39 and col. 24, lines 28-54). There is no evidence, support, teaching, suggestion or motivation in Hattori or Brown that repeatedly adjusting a retrieval parameter K as taught by Hattori would have been applied by one skilled in the art to the "changes or additions" to the user interface software modules or data records in Brown so that the changes or additions are manipulated when the plurality of items in the retrieval result exceeds a number set in advance, as recited in independent claim 15. Instead, the Office Action relies on impermissible hindsight using knowledge gleaned only from Applicants' disclosure (see MPEP §2145(X)(A)).

Further, claim 15 is amended to clarify the claimed rearranging, as suggested by the Examiners during the interview. As discussed during the interview, merely performing a second retrieval and obtaining new or additional items of service information, as allegedly taught by Hattori, is not the same as rearranging an order of a plurality of items of service information included in the retrieval result based upon a magnitude of values of the attribute items, as now recited in claim 15. Thus, claim 15 is patentable over the combination of Hattori and Brown.

Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

**III. Claim 24**

Added claim 24 also is patentable over the applied references.

**IV. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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